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eternal truths and supernaturally revealed ways of salvation which must not change. Here they face a modern crisis in their history, for life will not be denied—but that is another problem.

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DOES A PHILOSOPHY OF MORALS TEND TO UNDERMINE THE CHRISTIAN FAITH IN A PERSONAL GOD?

The Christian religion has its center of gravity in the belief that the highest existence is personal. That is to say, the Christian reposes his trust in a being who has in the highest degree those powers of self-consciousness and self-direction which we prize the most in ourselves. It is in the exercise of these powers that we come into inner relations with one another and into outer relations with things. Existences which come into conscious relations with one another we call persons. When we call the highest existence (God) personal we mean that we may have in the exercise of our highest powers an experience of relations with him of the same kind as those which we have with human beings at the best.

To the Christian, God truly exists. This is not to say that he exists in the sense in which some object of common knowledge—say, the sun or moon—exists or that our knowledge that he exists is the same in kind as the knowledge that such objects exist. We mean, rather, that the self-conscious self-direction which we ourselves exercise is of the same kind as that which constitutes the universe of things and that the being who exercises it exists for us in the sense in which other self-conscious beings like ourselves exist, namely, that without them our lives could not have the meaning they now have. In both instances the affirmation of existence is an act of faith—we are able to live the life we now consciously live by the confidence that they too exercise the same kind of activity as ourselves. Were it not so, the world would be to us a wilderness and ourselves without any reason for being here.

I call this a Christian faith because Christians, the world over and in all times, have seen in the personality of Jesus (whatever may have been their explanation of his career) an expression of God's own character—his good purpose toward them, his self-communicability to them, his estimate of their worth, his direction of the powers of the universe to their good. The whole meaning of the Christian life of service to men and confidence in one's own ultimate well-being would be thoroughly changed, were this faith to be lost.

Whenever the world of a man's thinking undergoes an appreciable change, this faith in a personal God undergoes revision and, in some instances, it seems to disappear. At such times arguments for the existence of God arise to reinforce the faith. Among these is what is called the moral argument. This argument, taking for granted the (substantially universal) distinction of right and wrong and recognizing its indispensability to mankind if men are to live together in peace, contends that a supreme personal moral ruler is necessary. Otherwise there could be no assurance that moral distinctions are anything more than maxims of convenience or that evil shall be requited and good rewarded. When the difference in the consequences disappears the distinction itself loses its supposed place among the realities of the universe. The ultimate and only guaranty that the moral distinction shall be vindicated—and, consequently, be actually valid—is to be found in a supreme ruler who is himself a moral personality. This is in substance the moral argument for the existence of God, whether it find expression in the popular expectation of a judgment day and future rewards and punishments or in the highly philosophical doctrine of Kant founded on the "categorical imperative."

Now, it is evident that the feeling or moral assumption of responsibility underlies this argument. The power for good it has effected in the minds of men is undoubtedly very great. It has brought steadiness to our thinking and conduct. Religious trust and moral conviction have been brought into alliance. It has humanized the universe. It has exalted the sense of personal worth to supremacy over all that is non-personal. It has led us to the view that material nature is made to serve a moral end. But a philosophy of morals must not be allowed to come to a standstill or be reduced to a repetition of platitudes—and this for the special reason that true morality itself never comes to a standstill or a round of prescribed duties. Indeed, movement is of the very essence of morality. May it be, then, that a growing philosophy of morals will tend to dissolve the well-known moral argument for God's existence and require a reconsideration of the whole doctrine of the personality of God, which seems at first sight implicitly dependent on the moral argument?

In order to the very inception of a philosophy of morals two definite processes of investigation are necessary, viz., first, a study of the history of morals and, second, an analysis of the fundamental moral concepts. The first of these is not so much concerned with the history of theories of morals as it is with the actual practices which men in great communities have been accustomed to approve or disapprove and have sought by

means in their power to maintain or suppress. The investigation may begin, for example, with the community we call a nation and trace the customs it enforces upon its citizens back through earlier stages of its career till the point is reached where it is as yet undifferentiated from other peoples. When this course of investigation has been carried out broadly by an examination of the life-story of many peoples it may bring us, conceivably, to a state of humanity in which the moral consciousness as we know it, that is, the firm distinction of right and wrong, was as yet unknown to men. It may be that we should find men starting with the appetites of the animal in control and seeking as their aim simply physical comfort. It may be that the original evils to their minds were the purely physical and that the demands that we call moral were just the ways of succeeding in their aim. Thus it may turn out that the morals of men have their ultimate basis, not in the inviolable will of a supreme legislator but in the desires of men to live. If so, a system of morals seemingly becomes purely the creative act of the will of men.

If, in the second place, we analyze, say, the concept of responsibility, we seem to find it a figure of speech based on the scenes of the courtroom with its accusation, trial, and sentence. It may be that the age-long experiences of the race, beginning with parental discipline and ending in great international tribunals of justice, have been crystallized in the imagination of men till they have taken the form of an abstract principle. Moreover, we find that what we call the sense of responsibility has undergone a radical change. Under a monarchical government it was easy enough to conclude that a single monarch presides over the deeds of men and their consequences, but under a democracy in which the laws arise out of the people's will and the criminal himself is one of the makers of the laws, the sense of responsibility becomes the affirmation of the purpose to be true to one's own best will. Is there any place left for a single supreme will to which men are purely subjects and not legislators? If so, how does a philosophy of morals affect belief in a personal God?

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